

INTRODUCTION



The Sara Davis Deterding Missionary Training School, which opened in Irvington in 1910, is depicted in an undated postcard. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*





An undated postcard depicts Butler College when it was located in Irvington. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*

INTRODUCTION

Irvington is a historic suburb located on the western edge of Warren Township, approximately five miles east of downtown Indianapolis. It is primarily a residential neighborhood that is bisected by Washington Street, a major east-west traffic thoroughfare.

Irvington was originally platted as an independent suburban town in 1870 but was annexed into the City of Indianapolis in 1902. The original plat of Irvington deviated from Indianapolis' typical grid layout and instead included a winding, picturesque street pattern that reflected the ideals of the Romantic landscape design era. Irvington today has more lineal blocks of brick streets than any neighborhood in the city, and its naturalistic plan is considered Indianapolis' largest and most developed example of Victorian Romantic landscape design.

Irvington is both architecturally and culturally significant to Indianapolis and Marion County. The area contains excellent examples of every major American architectural style from 1870-1950, including Italianate, Second Empire, Victorian Gothic, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. However, Irvington is perhaps best known for its fine collection of Arts & Crafts architecture, including the only known example of a Gustav Stickley-designed house in Indiana.

The educational and cultural significance of Irvington is perhaps just as remarkable as its architecture. In 1873, the area was selected as the new location for Northwestern Christian University, later renamed Butler University. From 1875 to 1928, Butler developed a campus in Irvington, which subsequently promoted a college-town atmosphere throughout the community. Although most of the campus buildings are gone, with the exception of the Bona Thompson Memorial Library, the intellectual spirit is still reflected in Irvington's many associations and groups.

Irvington was also the birthplace and home to the only historic art movement in central Indiana named for a specific place, the Irvington Group. In the early 1900s, this group of artists lived, met, practiced, and exhibited art in Irvington and today many of their homes and studios remain throughout the community.

For many years, the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) and its staff has considered Irvington an architecturally and historically significant area to the City of Indianapolis, Marion County. In 1987, the area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Spurred by the demolition of buildings along Washington Street, the Historic Irvington Community Council (HICC) initiated the local designation effort by creating a subcommittee, the "Irvington Historic Preservation Committee," which first met with IHPC staff in early 2001. The possibility of local historic designation was discussed to help manage demolition and insensitive alterations/land use. In October 2004, after three years of petitioning property owners and educating people about the IHPC, the HICC presented its petition for local historic designation. The IHPC agreed to allow staff to continue working with the HICC to develop a permanent Historic Area Plan and an Interim Historic Area Plan.

IRVINGTON HISTORIC AREA PLAN: INTRODUCTION

Developed and implemented in the Herron-Morton Place and St. Joseph Historic Districts, an Interim Historic Area Plan is a temporary plan that has limited regulations and serves as an intermediate step in the preservation planning process. The Irvington Historic Area Interim Preservation Plan was adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission on December 15, 2004 and was in effect while this permanent Historic Area Plan was developed. The interim plan is now null and void.

In December of 2004, IHPC staff began working with the Irvington Historic District Steering Committee to develop this permanent preservation plan. Throughout the planning process numerous committee meetings and public workshops were held to educate the public about the planning process, inform them of specific recommendations and changes, and gain public input and feedback regarding the proposed plan.

Staff members of the City's Division of Planning – Subarea were consulted in the formulation of land use and zoning recommendations. The "Historical & Architectural Significance" section was updated by Paul Diebold, President of the Irvington Historical Society, and Steve Barnett, Executive Director. The "Building Inventory" was chaired by Jason Larrison and, at the time of publication, continues to be an on-going project due to the significant size of the Irvington Historic District. On October 4th, 2006, the IHPC approved the Irvington Historic Area Plan, which was adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC) on October 18th, 2006.

The success of this preservation plan is the result of the cooperation of numerous neighborhood-based organizations, business owners, consultants, and volunteers. This dedicated group of people came together to achieve a common goal: to encourage sensitive new development and to protect the existing historic resources in Irvington. Their commitment to historic preservation has helped preserve a visual and physical piece of Indianapolis' history and ensured the existence of the city's architectural masterpieces for many years to come.

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the State Statute IC 36-7-11.1, which establishes and empowers the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission. After the approval of this plan by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission and its adoption by the Metropolitan Development Commission as part of the Marion County Comprehensive Plan, the provisions and requirements of IC 36-7-11.1 and this plan apply to all property and structures within the delineated area.

HISTORIC AREA DELINEATION



The James Layman family owned the Audubon Court apartments, located at 5703 East Washington Street; the Layman estate was located due south. Photo taken in 1926. *From Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society.*





The Johnson House, date unknown. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*

BACKGROUND

The Irvington Historic District is located on the western edge of Warren Township and is approximately five miles east of downtown Indianapolis. The area is currently the largest locally protected historic district in Marion County, Indiana, and includes over 2,800 buildings and 1,600 parcels of land. The district is roughly bound by Pleasant Run Parkway, South Drive on the north; the northern edge of the B & O Railroad right-of-way, except Rawles Terrace between Audubon Road and Ritter Avenue, on the south; the west curblin of Arlington Avenue on the east; and the western lot line of 5330 Ohmer Avenue, to the west curblin of Ohmer Avenue, to the east curblin of Butler Avenue, to the north side of the Conrail right-of-way, and to the east curblin of Emerson Avenue on the west.

The boundaries encompassed in this plan are primarily based on the Irvington National Register Historic District Boundaries. The boundaries represent the original plat of Irvington and the greatest extent of the incorporated town that retains continuity. Although Ellenberger Park and Pleasant Run Creek are included in the boundaries of the Irvington National Register District, they have been excluded from this plan.

The following is an excerpt from the Irvington Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination:

The qualities that define the edge of this district relate directly to the integrity of the historic suburban town plats and additions of Irvington as a planned community. The boundaries consist of natural as well as man-made divisions.

The eastern edge of the district is defined as Julian and Johnson's Original Irvington Plat--Arlington Avenue. East of Arlington the area lacks the streetscapes which are associated with Irvington.

Traditionally, the southern boundary of Irvington has been the B & O Railroad right-of-way; however, the southern boundary turns north at Audubon Road to cut out Rawles Terrace and that section of Rawles Avenue, between Audubon Road and Ritter Avenue. Houses in the area removed are almost all too new to contribute to the district. The southern boundary also stops at Ohmer Avenue. This is due to a loss of integrity caused by the demolition of the Butler University Campus and the subsequent new construction on this land.

The western boundary, Emerson Avenue, marks the division between Warren and Center Townships, Irvington being located in the former. Furthermore, when Irvington had its own post office in the early 1900s, Emerson Avenue was used as the western edge of the mail area defined as Irvington.

AREA BOUNDARY

The boundary officially designed by this plan is described below and is depicted on the map on page 18.

Beginning at a point at the intersection of Pleasant Run Creek bed and North Arlington Avenue, the eastern boundary of the district runs along the west curblin of Arlington Avenue for nine and one-half blocks to the intersection of the B & O Railroad right-of-way.

The boundary then turns northwest and runs along the northern edge of the B & O right-of-way to the point of juncture with the eastern curblin of South Audubon Road and then turns north and continues along that line to the intersection of that part of Rawles Avenue west of Audubon Road.

The boundary turns west and runs along the north curblin of this section of Rawles Avenue to the western curblin of South Ritter Avenue. The boundary turns south and continues along the western curblin of South Ritter Avenue to the intersection with the B & O Railroad right of way.

The boundary then turns northwest and continues along that line to the western edge of Lot 31 of Downey and Ohmer's Woodland Park Addition at 5330 Ohmer Avenue.

The boundary then follows the western property line of 5330 Ohmer Avenue north to its intersection with Ohmer Avenue.

The boundary then follows the western curblin of Ohmer Avenue to the southern property line of Lot 3 of Collette's Resubdivision of Collette's Second University Addition (221 South Butler Avenue).

The boundary then turns westward and runs to the east curblin of Butler Avenue. It then turns northward along the east curblin of Butler Avenue and continues to the intersection with the north side of the Conrail right-of-way.

The boundary then runs west along the Conrail right-of-way to its intersection with Emerson Avenue.

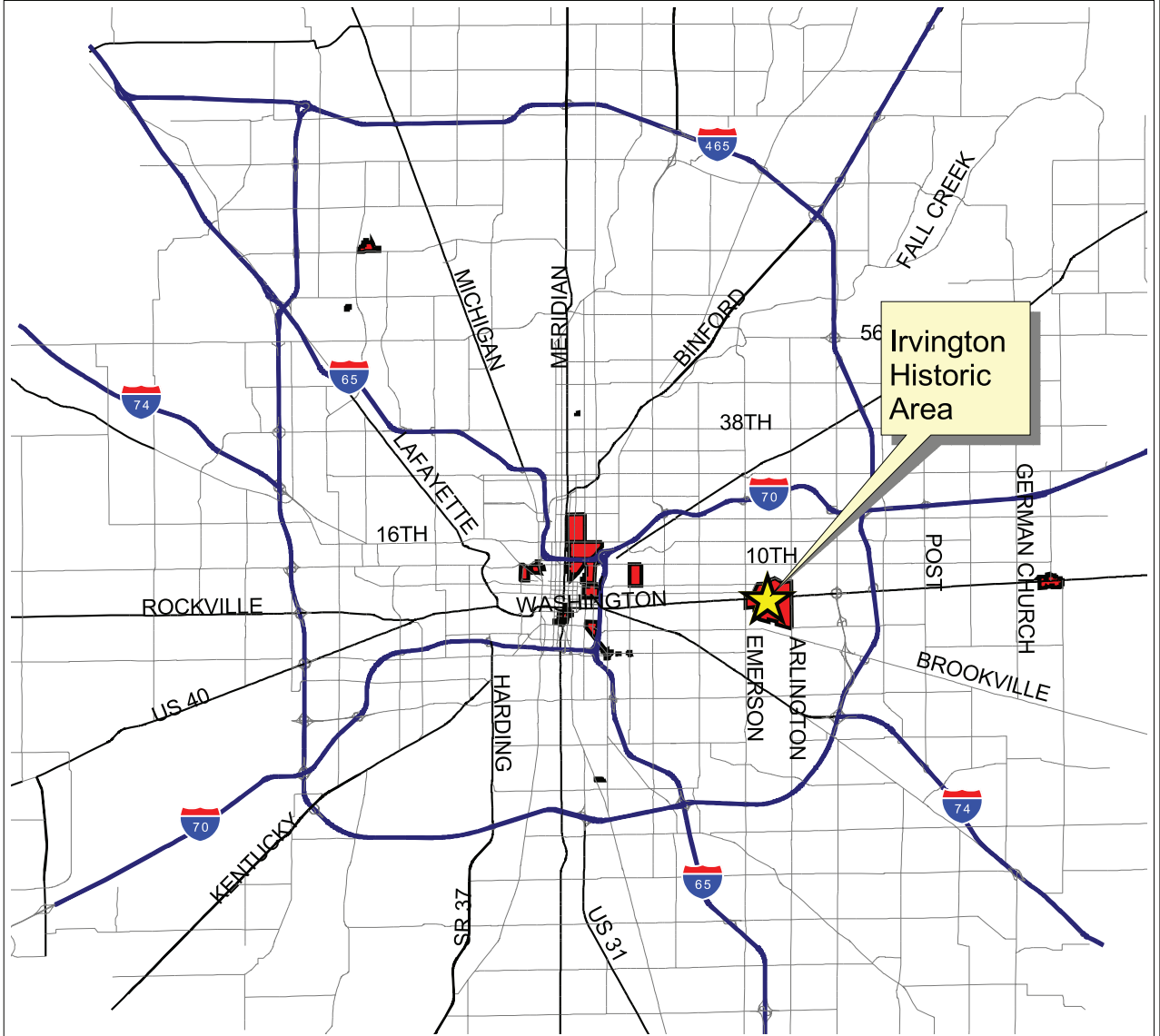
At the intersection of the right-of-way and the eastern curblin of Emerson Avenue, the boundary turns northward and extends to the north curblin of Pleasant Run Parkway South Drive.

The boundary follows Pleasant Run Parkway South Drive to the intersection with the southern curblin of east Michigan Street/Pleasant Run Parkway South Drive.

At the intersection of east Michigan St./Pleasant Run Parkway South Drive, the boundary turns eastward and runs to the west curblin of North Arlington Avenue at the point of origin.

General Location Map

Irvington Historic Area



Majorstr.shp
 Interstate
 Major Thoroughfare
 Primary Arterial
 Historic Districts-IHPC

This map does not represent a legal document, it is intended to serve as an aid in graphic representation only. Information shown on this map is not warranted for accuracy or merchantability.

1 0 1 2 3 Miles

August 17, 2006

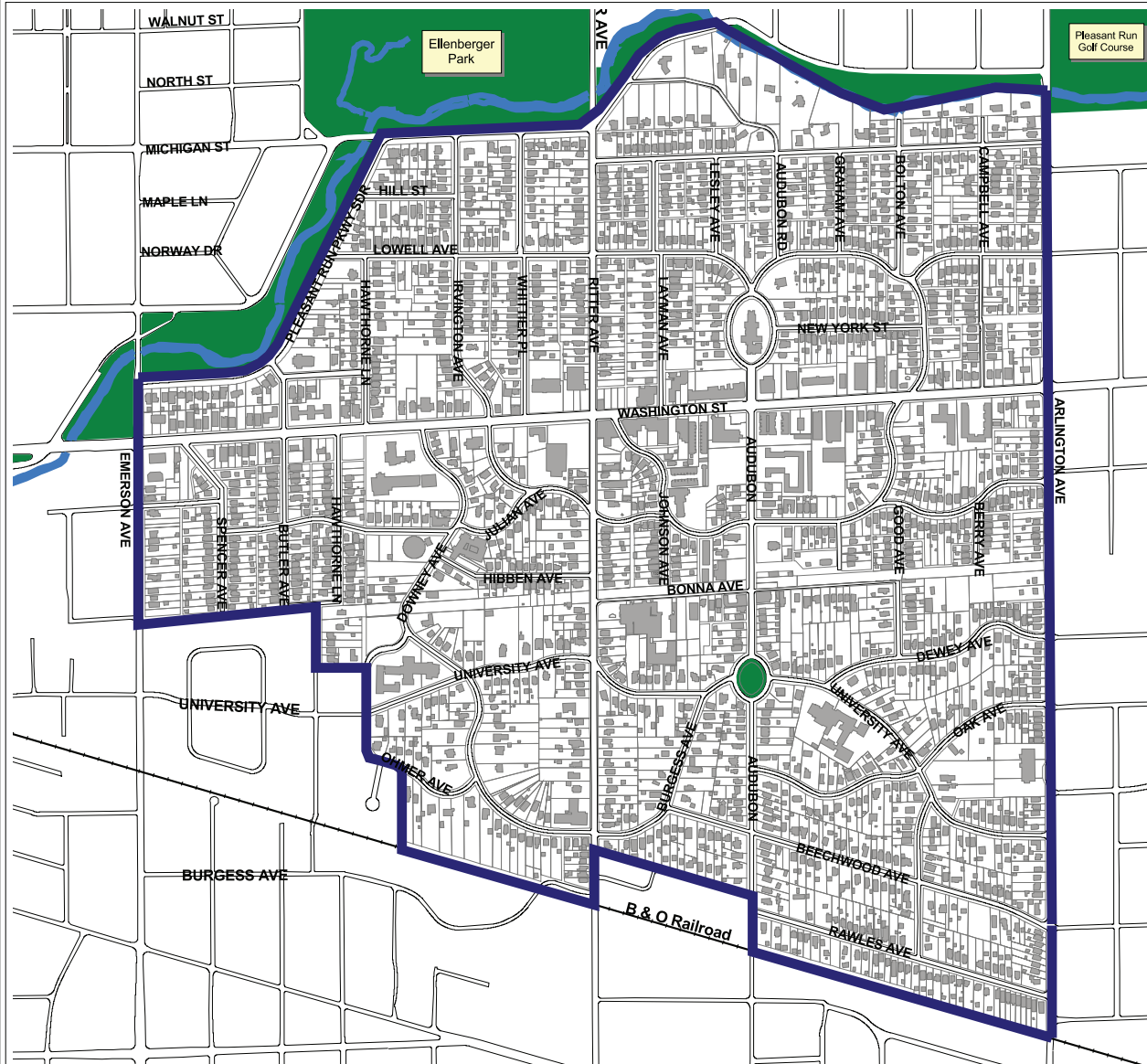
Produced By: The Indianapolis
 Historic Preservation Commission






Data Source: The City of Indianapolis
 Geographic Information Systems



Irvington Historic District Boundary Map

Indianapolis, Indiana



-  Proposed IHPC Boundaries
-  Historic Area Buildings
-  Historic Area Parcels
-  Streams
-  Parks

February 2006

Produced By: The Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

Data Source: The City of Indianapolis Geographic Information Systems

This map does not represent a legal document. It is intended to serve as an aid in graphic representation only. Information shown on this map is not warranted for accuracy or merchantability.



HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE



A postcard view of East Washington Street, date unknown. *From the Collection of the Irvington Historical Society.*





Kendall House, Audubon Road. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE



The Irvington Historic District is significant because it contains one of Indianapolis's earliest planned suburbs, as well as a section of Pleasant Run Parkway designed by George Kessler, the city's leading early-twentieth-century landscape architect. It is also significant because, as the site of Butler University from 1875-1928, it developed rapidly into a distinct college community that enjoyed many of the intellectual, artistic, and social activities associated with college towns. Architecturally, the district developed swiftly during the Butler era and retains a high percentage of residential, educational, and religious structures from that period. Except along Washington Street (U.S. 40/National Road) where constant growth and change have eroded some of the district's original commercial nature, the historic fabric of the district is remarkably intact with few changes and intrusions to alter its historic appearance.

Although the district's major period of historic significance is the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, it was populated as early as the first quarter of the nineteenth century. John Wilson arrived in the area from Connersville, Indiana, in 1820 and farmed eighty acres along Pleasant Run Creek west of what is now Hawthorne Lane. Later, as the National Road, now Washington Street, became an important route into Indianapolis from the east, Wilson built a ten-room inn on the northwest corner of present-day Washington Street and Butler Avenue (since demolished). Wilson's son-in-law, Aquilla Parker, owned and operated the inn during the 1840s and 50s. As family members passed away, or perhaps travelers at the inn died from illness, the Parkers developed a typical family cemetery behind their home at the southeast corner of Washington Street and Emerson Avenue. By 1906, Hilton U. Brown had bought the Parker home and in turn, sold the lot to artist William Forsyth. The cemetery remained and later, the Parker family remains were reinterred at a mass grave with a large marker in Crown Hill Cemetery. Headstones were not removed and it is believed that some burials may never have been moved. It is still classified as a cemetery by both the City of Indianapolis and State of Indiana, and survives as a reminder of Irvington's pioneer-era origins within the district.

Warren Township was created in 1822 and was joined as part of Center Township until sufficient population had settled in the area. In 1826, the first officers of Warren Township were elected. John Ellenberger arrived from Cincinnati in 1853, first renting 320 acres from the Sandusky family and then purchasing 180 acres of wooded land from Pleasant Run Parkway north to Eleventh Street. Part of this land is now preserved as Ellenberger Park, a part of the National Register historic district.

In June of 1870, Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson, both from Wayne County, Indiana, purchased from the Sanduskys the 320 acres Ellenberger farmed. They then divided the land into 109 lots, each of two or more acres. They combined this with an eighty-acre tract owned by Dr. Levi Ritter to form the "Town of Irvington." Instead of dividing the property into a straight forward, rectilinear grid, the founders developed a plan of gracefully curved streets that followed the natural topography and incorporated two oval open spaces. The south oval was designated a public park and remains so today; the north oval was to be for a "female college," but ultimately would be the site of a house and later a church. Julian and Johnson hired their friend, Robert Howard, the Wayne County Surveyor. Howard was a trained engineer and had designed Glen Miller, a public park in Richmond, with similar winding paths. In an account in the June 1908 Indiana Magazine of History, Johnson himself

stated that the plan was derived from Glendale, Ohio, not far from Wesleyan Female College, where Julian's daughter had attended school. Glendale was the first Victorian Romantic suburb in the United States (1851). In a broader sense, the plan was influenced by the nineteenth-century thought that prized the natural setting and the incorporation of picturesque landscape elements into a residential setting. In spirit, it is linked with such communities as Llewellyn Park (1853) in Orange, New Jersey, designed by A.J. Davis; Lake Forest, Illinois (1857), and Riverside, Illinois (1868), both designed by Frederick Law Olmstead. Interest in Romantic landscape planning had been expressed as early as 1849 by the widely influential landscape gardener, Andrew Jackson Downing, in *The Horticulturalist* and remained popular throughout the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that Washington Irving, for whom Irvington was named, was a proponent of Romantic landscape ideas and served as president of a consulting board advertising the commissioners for New York City's Central Park.

Aside from its winding layout, there are physical reminders of the development of the community. After annexation, the City of Indianapolis used Barrett Law provisions to pave many Irvington streets with brick. Irvington Avenue, Layman Avenue, Whittier Place, and Bonna Avenue still retain this significant feature, installed in the first decade of the twentieth century. Limestone curbing and in some cases, granite corner curbs, augment portions of Irvington streets. Additionally, some sidewalks in Irvington retain distinctive ceramic street name tiles from this era and several sidewalks have bronze name plates from the original contractor.

Perhaps more remarkable than the naturalistic plan of Irvington was its locally unprecedented land use controls. Each purchaser of a lot in the community agrees to not build certain "vicious" buildings or allow certain uses on their land. Once the town incorporated in 1873, leaders would also aim to reinforce the natural beauty of Irvington by outlawing bird hunting and requiring lot owners to build sidewalks and plant street trees.

In September of 1871, Dr. Ritter made a small addition north of the original Irvington that extended the community to Pleasant Run Creek and thereby established the creek as the northernmost boundary of the suburb. In 1873, James E. Downey and Nicholas Ohmer made an addition south of Ritter's and west of the original plat that carried on the same meandering street pattern. In December of 1872, subdividing of the original two-acre lots began. This was further encouraged by the panic of 1873.

Tolerance of ethnic diversity was a unique social feature early in Irvington's history. The plat did not forbid African Americans from owning land; the abolitionist stance of nearly all the community's first land owners insured a degree of tolerance not likely seen in most central-Indiana small towns. Early census records show that African Americans lived in the district from the beginning. Perhaps the most visible monument to this is the stuccoed c.1915 Irvington Baptist Church at 231 South Good Avenue. This congregation formed in 1887 and it is speculated that the house at 5712 University Avenue may be the group's first sanctuary (what seems to be this house appears on 1889 Sanborn maps as a "negro church").

The social and cultural character of the new suburb was to a great extent set in July of 1873, when Northwestern Christian University, then located in Indianapolis's Old Northside,

decided to relocate to Irvington. The college hired Edwin May to design a main building, opened for use in 1875. In 1877, the institution's name was changed to Butler University to honor Ovid Butler, president of the university board for nearly twenty-five years. The university remained in Irvington until 1928, when it moved to its current location. During the 53 years that the university was located in Irvington, it was a significant cultural influence in the community. Also, Northwestern Christian had a policy of admitting persons regardless of race or gender, which suited the thoughts of Julian and Johnson well. The practice continued throughout the school's tenure in Irvington.

Butler faculty, administration, and staff lived throughout the district in residences such as the Howe-Kingsbury-Spiegl House at 317 Downey Avenue, as well as a variety of more modest structures. The Benton House at 312 South Downey Avenue is named for owners Dr. Allen and Silence Benton. Allen Benton served two terms as president of Butler in the late-nineteenth century; Silence was active in the Disciples of Christ church and wrote devotion literature from her library in the home. Many Butler employees lived in the numerous bungalows scattered throughout the district or in some of the American Foursquare houses built to accommodate the increased demand for housing. A number of houses were rented by "Greek" student organizations, and a few were originally built as fraternity or sorority houses. In the early 1920s, the Pi Beta Phi sorority occupied 275 South Audubon Road, a distinctive Arts & Crafts-style house. Butler President Robert Aley lived in 59 North Hawthorne Lane for a time during the college's last years in Irvington.

The university itself was responsible for the construction of a number of buildings. By 1909, six buildings existed on the Butler campus. Today, only the Bona Thompson Library building remains, which was built between 1902 and 1903 to the design of the architectural firm of Dupont and Johnson. The Bona Thompson building also served as the Irvington branch library from 1903 to 1914, when the library board relocated the branch to a storefront on East Washington Street.

During the same period, Butler was influential in the training of Christian missionaries. In 1910, the Sarah Davis Deterding Missionary School opened in Irvington. Many of its students took courses at Butler and by 1919, the two institutions shared twenty-eight faculty members. Charles T. Paul was the long time director of the missionary school. The Paul family lived at several addresses in the district, including one of the doubles on University Avenue just one-half block east of the school. Among its faculty at this time was Christopher B. Coleman, a Yale University graduate and history professor who later became director of the Indiana Historical Bureau, secretary of the Indiana Historical Society, and acting director of the Indiana State Library. Also on the faculty was David Starr Jordan, an avowed evolutionist, who taught botany and zoology during the 1870s. In 1928, the United Christian Missionary Society purchased the Deterding Missions Building to use as the national and international headquarters of the Disciples of Christ, and in 1940 the society expanded into the vacant Bona Thompson Library. The two buildings were joined by an addition in the 1950s, while additions to the old missionary school in 1946 and 1958 filled the entire block. As the headquarters of the Disciples of Christ, the complex housed its own print shop, a full post office branch, a ham radio broadcasting office, banks of telex machines, a 1909 chapel, a 1950s auditorium, numerous social welfare non-profit groups, and offices for church

programs. Many former field missionaries who were supported by staff of the Deterding Missions Building came to work at the building and live in Irvington.

The construction of the Board of Church Extension Building at 110 South Downey Avenue in 1958 was an outgrowth of the activities of the Disciples' activities in the Deterding Missions Building. Unfortunately, the project claimed the Second Empire Scot Butler House. Nonetheless, this "building in the round" as Irvington residents call it, is distinctive in design and fits the scale of the community well. Architects Charles Betts and Rollin Mosher, staff members of the Disciples, designed the building.

Irvington was a leader in the boy and girl scouts movement and scouting perhaps bridged the gap between Irvington's appreciation of nature and the community's educational bent. Francis Belzer was the first president of the Central Indiana Boy Scout Council in 1913; the Belzers lived in the well-preserved Queen Anne-style house at 320 South Audubon Road for many years starting in 1904. The Irvington Presbyterian Church was the meeting site for the first Girl Scout troop in Indianapolis.

The natural setting and intellectual climate of Irvington attracted a group of Hoosier artists who, during the 1920s and 30s, became known as "The Irvington Group." The group became very influential in the development of art in Indiana and the greater Midwest. One member of the group, William Forsyth, achieved an international reputation. Ten exhibits of the group were held at Carr's Hall, a large meeting room on the second floor of Silas Carr's automobile showroom at 5436 East Washington Street (the building was demolished following a 1999 fire). Among the artists who exhibited as part of the Irvington Group were Simon Paul Baus and his son, Paul; Carolyn G. Bradley, an art instructor at Manual High School; Alice D. Cook; Robert C. Craig, an art instructor at Arsenal Technical High School; Constance Forsyth and her father, William Forsyth; Martha Lee Frost; Helene Hibben and her brother, Thomas; William F. Kaeser; Dorothy Morlan; Frederick Polley; Robert Selby; Clifton Wheeler and his wife, Hilah Drake; and Charles Yeager. Many of their works of art featured scenes along Pleasant Run.

William Forsyth, who lived at 15 South Emerson Avenue (demolished), studied at the Indiana School of Art and the Royal Academy of Munich, Germany. In addition to his association with The Irvington Group, Forsyth was a member of The Hoosier Group, whose membership included such famed artists as T. C. Steele. Along with other Irvington artists, Forsyth supervised the artists who installed the murals in the Burdsal units of what is today Indianapolis' Wishard Hospital.

Clifton Wheeler studied art under William Forsyth and in New York under William Merrit Chase. Upon his return to Indianapolis, Wheeler taught art at the Herron School of Art and Shortridge High School. He was also the artist of the original mural above the Circle Theater marquee that was restored in the 1980s. Wheeler and his wife, Hilah Drake, lived and had their studio at 5317 Lowell Avenue.

William Kaeser, probably the youngest member of The Irvington Group, was born in Durlach, Germany. In the 1930s he was commissioned to paint a mural for the Pendleton,

Indiana post office. Kaeser and his wife, Mildred Joslin, resided at 316 South Audubon Road.

Helene Hibben primarily worked in sculpture. Her most famous piece, a bas-relief of Hoosier poet, James Whitcomb Riley, is in the permanent collection of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Hibben lived at 5237 Pleasant Run Parkway, where she also conducted pre-school classes for children.

By 1939, the artistic activity in Irvington was waning. William Forsyth, the “Dean” of the Irvington Group, had died in 1935, and other members, such as Frederick Polley and Carolyn Bradley, had moved away. The 1938 annual exhibit of the group was at first postponed and ultimately, never put together. The heyday of the group had passed, but many of the artists continued to live and work in the community decades afterward.

Another artist who was not a member of The Irvington Group but who lived in the community was the influential cartoonist, Frank “Kin” Hubbard. Hubbard lived at 5070 Pleasant Run Parkway North Drive from 1909 to 1928. Hubbard created the comic panel, “Abe Martin of Brown County,” which he first introduced in 1904 in *The Indianapolis News* and syndicated in more than 300 newspapers across the country prior to his death in 1930.

Later in the twentieth century, artists continued to be attracted to Irvington. Garo Antresian was a world-famous lithographer who taught at Herron Art Institute in the 1950s. Antresian literally wrote the book on lithographic technique while teaching at Herron and living at 5903 East Pleasant Run Parkway in Irvington. His writings on lithography are still required reading for aspiring printmakers at most art schools in the United States.

Irvington also served as the home of a number of significant authors during the early-twentieth century, many of them women. Lucille Morehouse bridges the gap between art and writing; she was a long-time fine arts writer for the *Indianapolis Star* in the 1920s and 30s. Morehouse lived in the district at 5958 Beechwood Avenue. Five of the ten known female authors who lived in the district should be cited. Grace Julian Clarke, niece of Irvington founder, Jacob B. Julian, received her degree from Butler University. She was a founder of the Irvington Woman’s Club in 1892 and a weekly contributor to the *Indianapolis Star* for 18 years, where she was the first female columnist. In 1902, she authored *Some Impressions*, her perspective of her father, George W. Julian, and in 1923, she wrote a biography of her father. In addition to her literary accomplishments, she also was appointed head of Indianapolis’s first employment office by President Woodrow Wilson and in 1931, was appointed to the Indianapolis City Planning Commission. She resided at 115 South Audubon Road.

Augusta Louise Stevenson, born in Patriot, Indiana, also received her degree from Butler University. Although she taught for a number of years in the Indianapolis Public School system, her primary recognition is as a pioneer in dramatizing historical events for children and as author of dozens of children’s books. Among her works are the 1913 *Children’s Classics in Dramatic Form* and the 1916 *Dramatized Scenes from American History*. Although Stevenson lived in Irvington for the major part of her life, both of her residences at 5797 and 5803 East Washington Street have been demolished.

Other women who contributed to the community's literary life included Butler graduate Lucille Carr from Clark County, Indiana; Evelyn Mitchell Butler, daughter of Butler University president Scot Butler and granddaughter of Ovid Butler, for whom the university was named; and Irvington native Jean Brown Wagoner, who was also a Butler graduate. Wagoner's children's history series were used nationally, bringing history to life for a generation of baby boomers.

Men also contributed to Irvington's literary scene. George Cottman is often called the "father of Indiana history" for his leading role in the serious study of Hoosier history. The Cottmans moved to Irvington for its scenic beauty and intellectual atmosphere. While living in Irvington, Cottman conceived of the idea of a new periodical on Indiana history. He called it the *Indiana Magazine of History*. He edited and printed the first few years of the publication in his Irvington home at 336 North Ritter Avenue, utilizing a backyard shed to house his small printing press. The *Indiana Magazine of History* is generally accepted as the leading scholarly journal of its kind in the state.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE



The architectural significance of Irvington lies in the fact that the residential fabric of this once-suburban community remains as an intact display of characteristic style from the late 1800s through 1930. The district contains one of the heaviest concentrations of bungalows and single and double American Foursquares on Indianapolis's east side.

At one time, Irvington had the finest collection of Second Empire-style buildings in central Indiana. About ten houses, as well as the community schoolhouse (burned in 1903), were built in the style. Unfortunately, only a handful exist today. The Benton House, located at 312 South Downey Avenue, is the best example. Nicholas Ohmer built the house as a speculative venture and as noted earlier, the house is also famous for its connections to Butler University. More cottage-sized, the Benton House appears to have a link to a popular house pattern book, *Bicknell's Village Builder*. A design of the house appears in the book, however without credit. It is difficult to know whether Ohmer based the house on the book pattern, or vice versa. In June of 1966, the house was purchased by the Irvington Historical Landmarks Foundation Inc., and was listed in the National Register in 1973. It presently serves as a community meeting place for Irvington clubs and as a museum of the Victorian era. The c.1873 house at 250 South Audubon Road is also a Second Empire-style example, though it was altered with the addition of face brick in about 1920.

Italianate-style houses include the Julian-Clarke House and the Robert Blount House at 5470 University Avenue. The Julian-Clarke House features sheet metal window hoods, an arcaded porch, a two-story bay window, and a bracketed roofline. It is one of a very few houses in the district to retain a large portion of its original two-acre lot. When the house was built in 1873, George Julian had just completed five terms as United States Representative for east-central Indiana. He would later serve as Survey-General of New Mexico under President Grover Cleveland. In 1899, Julian died and the house passed to his daughter and son-in-law, Grace and Charles B. Clarke. Following the death of Mrs. Clarke, the house served as the Huff Sanitarium from 1944 to 1973. Only minor alterations were made to meet the facility's needs. The house was purchased by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and sold to the Taylor family, who has restored it as a single-family residence. There are frame examples of Italianates located at 345 North Audubon Road, 325 South Audubon Road, and 352 North Ritter Avenue.

Victorian Gothic was a less popular alternative. The district includes two such houses that are unique in Indianapolis. Eudorus Johnson was town co-founder Sylvester Johnson's son. Eudorus was the long-time Marion County Auditor, and he chose to build at 5631 University Avenue, facing Irving Circle Park. The house makes an impressive statement with its massive wood gable trusses, stone window hoods, and two towers—one circular and the other polygonal. Chauncey Butler owned the house at 359 South Ritter Avenue, a wood-frame Victorian Gothic house with large porch. Once used as a boarding house for Butler co-eds, Hilton U. Brown claimed that many of the romantic matches in Irvington could be credited to the presence of this house.

Numerous cottages and vernacular Queen Anne structures are found throughout the Irvington district. The most modest of these are located on Bonna, Good, and Burgess Avenues and were generally occupied by day laborers. The cottages located at 324 Burgess Avenue, 114

South Good Avenue, and 5717 Bonna Avenue are three typical examples of day laborer housing. The gingerbread details of 324 Burgess and 114 South Good highlight the otherwise simple frame cottages. The ornamental treatment of both structures is very similar; they both have gables decorated with gingerbread and drop pendants, both have sawn attic vents, and both have wood brackets. 5717 Bonna Avenue represents a very simple cottage highlighted by three wooden brackets supporting the roof overhang, the turned porch posts, and two-over-two, double-hung, sash windows.

Vernacular one-and-a-half story cottages appear throughout Irvington. The striking similarities between 109 South Graham Avenue, 321 North Whittier Place, 315 Lesley Avenue, and 5823 Lowell Avenue suggest the use of pattern book designs. All four houses display cross-gabled roofs with cornice returns, front porches, clapboard siding, and similar window surrounds. Variations appear in the form of window and door locations and the use of fishscale shingles.

Modest one-and-a-half story frame residences, such as 322 North Ritter Avenue, typify houses found throughout the district built to meet the need of housing created by Butler University. 322 North Ritter also exhibits the kind of Craftsman-influenced details that gave these structures their individual character. Irvington was a leading community in the Arts and Crafts movement in Indianapolis. The Recker House at 59 North Hawthorne Lane is one of the first bungalows to be featured in the *Indianapolis Star*. Carlos and Anne Recker obtained plans from Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Home Builders Club to build the house in 1909. Both were graduates of Butler in Irvington; Anne was former president Scot Butler's daughter and Carlos operated an Arts and Crafts furniture store in downtown Indianapolis. Though covered with aluminum siding, the house nonetheless retains much of its authentic Craftsman lines. The Layton Allen residence, 28 North Audubon Road, illustrates the high degree of sophistication the bungalow form could achieve in the hands of a skilled architect. Marshall Van Arman was architect of the Thornton House at 75 North Audubon Road. This Arts and Crafts landmark house features glacial boulders pressed into concrete for the porch and lower walls, as well as the extensive stone fence surrounding the lot. Others would also use boulder work for their homes. The Knapp House at 151 South Downey Avenue is an excellent example of the rustic Craftsman style, designed by Walker Weesner, an architect for Bell Telephone and an Irvington resident. Indianapolis architect Charles H. Byfield designed 5621 Beechwood Avenue for William Forsythe, a railway clerk, in 1911. This house exhibits strong influence from Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Style, with its low, spreading lines, rationalized stucco and timber panels, deep open eaves, and large porch. Other Irvington Arts and Crafts-style homes were executed in stucco. George Hoagland, an Indianapolis architect, designed the Wheeler family home at 5317 Lowell Avenue. Katherine Merrill Graydon, distinguished professor of English at Butler, hired Herbert Foltz to plan her 1908 stuccoed Craftsman house at 303 South Downey Avenue.

Craftsman-style houses and Craftsman-influenced bungalows are found in abundance within Irvington. This can be attributed, in part, to the style's appeal as a middle-class dwelling. The simplicity of its design allowed the house to be easily constructed using local materials and craftsmen. The houses at 303 South Downey Avenue, 5834 University Avenue, 322 North Ritter Avenue, and 5949 University Avenue, depict many characteristics of Craftsman

styling. Each of these houses possesses knee braces supporting low, overhanging roofs with wide eaves. Rafter tails and purlins are also visible.

Five bungalow designs, typical of the Irvington area, are 447 North Audubon Road, 5908 University Avenue, 5830 University Avenue, 339 North Whittier Place, and 72 North Ritter Avenue. Centrally located shed dormers are common to all of the examples except 447 North Audubon Road, which has a gabled dormer. Each house possesses the typical bungalow characteristics of overhanging, gabled roofs that extend to cover the porch. The porch supports consist of heavy piers, the majority of which are brick. 447 North Audubon Road, 5830 University Avenue, and 5908 University Avenue were all stained a natural dark brown, another bungalow characteristic.

American Foursquare houses are also common in Irvington. A large number of Foursquares were built as duplexes in response to the Butler University demand for housing, such as 5618-5620 Lowell Avenue. An inexpensive style to build, the Foursquare is said to offer the most house for the least price. As a single family structure and as a duplex, we find this style on virtually every corner, street, and avenue of the district. 60 North Ritter Avenue, 270 South Ritter Avenue, and 5962 Oak Avenue, typify the Foursquare style through the use of low-pitched, hipped roofs, centrally located hipped dormers, and a simple square shape.

The numerous Foursquares interspersed among the bungalows, Queen Anne houses, and vernacular cottages complete the impression of residential design cohesion. Similar in scale and materials and sharing certain stylistic features, such as roofs with deep overhangs, dormers, and the frequent appearance of front porches, American Foursquare houses melded well into the typical Irvington streetscape. A comparison of 5962 Oak Avenue with the already mentioned 322 North Ritter Avenue demonstrates how well these two residential forms complement each other. Residences in different styles, such as the Colonial Revival house at 410 North Audubon Road and the Neoclassical Graham-Stephenson Residence at 5432 University Avenue, offer variation to the overall design unity of the district while still contributing to its turn-of-the-century character.

Colonial and Georgian Revival styles may likewise be seen in Irvington. 410 North Audubon Road contains such elements of Colonial Revival architecture as symmetry, a side-gabled roof, and an emphasis on the central doorway articulated by classical features. The Abendroth-Oberholtzer House at 5802 University Avenue is essentially a Foursquare design with its symmetrical shape and central, gabled dormers. However, architectural details echo the Georgian Revival style. Dentil molding is located at the roofline of the house and porch. The porch roof is supported by eight Doric columns. The Howe-Kingsbury-Spiegel House at 317 Downey Avenue was built in 1904 by Will David Howe, an English professor at Butler University. The two-and-a-half story, rectangular house contains several typical qualities of Georgian Revival architecture. The central bay of the main facade is slightly projected and articulated by pilasters. The gambrel roof has two pedimented, gabled dormers on the main facade. The centrally located portico's roof is also pedimented and supported by Doric columns.

Other styles represented in Irvington are Neoclassical and Free Classic. The most recognized Neoclassical structure is the Graham-Stephenson House at 5432 University Avenue. The house was originally built in 1889 by William H. H. Graham, the American consul to Winnipeg, Canada, appointed by President Benjamin Harrison. In 1921, while still under the ownership of the Grahams, the house was rented by the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority of Butler University. Two years later, the house was purchased by David Curtis Stephenson, head of the Indiana chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. Stephenson remodeled the house by creating the present south (main) facade and adding a four-car garage on the lot behind the house. In the late 1920s, it was again a fraternity chapter house, first for Chi Rho Zeta, and then for Phi Delta Theta. After a brief time as a restaurant and many years as a multi-family home, it is currently maintained as a private residence. The two-and-a-half story wood frame structure is built with a square footprint. Four Ionic columns support the portico's roof, which is topped by a wooden balustrade. The front door contains an etched-glass window by Ivan Pogue, a descendant of one of Indianapolis's first settlers. The house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

The Hackleman-McNutt House at 5438 East Lowell Avenue and the house at 307 South Audubon Road exemplify the Free Classic style of architecture. The pedimented porch roof, gabled dormer with returns, Palladian windows, and Doric columns are characteristic traits of the Free Classic style. The Zimri Bennett House at 307 South Audubon Road was constructed in 1908. The cross-gable peak of the main facade is highlighted by an ornate wood panel and oval window. The centrally-located, paired, double-hung sash windows are framed by three engaged Ionic columns.

Builders filled what few lots remained in Irvington with smaller Tudor or Colonial Revival cottages in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Several of these appear to be "kit" houses – made from pre-cut lumber and shipped to Irvington by rail. The house at 50 South Butler Avenue conforms to the Sears "Avalon" model, an Arts and Crafts/Prairie bungalow. On the Parkway at 5315 Pleasant Run is a brick-faced English cottage, the Sears "Stratford" model. Another probable Sears house was destroyed in 2004 by a natural gas explosion.

Larger structures also contribute to the historic integrity of the district. The Irvington United Methodist Church, the Irvington Public School Number 57, and the apartment buildings such as the Victoria, though larger in scale, are interspersed into the residential fabric in such a way that they confirm rather than detract from the visual cohesiveness of the district. The English Gothic Revival Irvington Presbyterian Church is the other major church in the district. Merritt Harrison, a congregation member, was the architect. The previously mentioned Bona Thompson Memorial Center at 5350 University Avenue has great architectural significance in addition to its historical significance. While the old Federal Building downtown is often cited as the earliest example of monumental classicism in Indianapolis, Bona Thompson Library actually predates the old Federal Building.

The educational needs of Irvington were met by two public elementary schools: the previously mentioned George W. Julian School Number 57, and George B. Loomis School Number 85. The George W. Julian School, located at 5439 East Washington Street, is a Renaissance-inspired, two-story, square structure of red brick. The impetus to move the

school to the new Washington Street business/civic corner came in 1903, when the old Irvington School facing Irving Circle Park suffered the second fire in its history. With the construction of a new firehouse (long since demolished) across Washington Street, the new school would be safe. The main facade, which faces Washington Street, is symmetrically divided into three elements by two arched entrances with limestone surrounds. Above each arch is a single window with a limestone balustrade. Stone stringcourses surround the structure at the first and second floor levels. The second floor windows have stone lintels and sills. Herbert Foltz designed the original 1903 building plus subsequent additions into the 1920s. The George B. Loomis School (1928), located at 338 South Arlington Avenue, is a flat-roofed, red brick structure highlighted by a crenellated parapet. The parapet displays diamond-patterned brick work. The main facade contains nine bays, four on each side of the central entrance pavilion. The north facade contains one central entrance bay. Above the limestone-trimmed entrance is a large window; above the cornice is a blank stone tablet. The west facade contains nine bays with two small, one-story brick additions on each side of the central bay. Charles Byfield was the architect. IPS closed the school in the mid-1990s and a private owner converted the school into office and meeting space.

Public buildings are randomly scattered throughout the district and incorporated alongside residential properties. The Marion County Children's Guardian Home has existed at 5751 University Avenue since 1898. The present structure was planned in a modified Georgian Revival style in 1915 by Herbert Foltz. It sits two-and-a-half stories tall on a raised basement. A limestone stringcourse divides the basement from the first floor. The parapet is capped in limestone. Limestone and brick voussoirs accent the first floor windows. All of the windows are double-hung sash replacements with wood frames and limestone sills. Above the main door is a broken limestone pediment. Below the pediment are two double-hung sash windows with limestone surrounds that flank a limestone garland and medallion. A flat entablature with dentils rests below the windows and is supported by limestone scrolled brackets. The door is framed in wood with a curved, broken pediment which features an urn. Small brackets and rope moldings are located on each side of the door. Authorities finished a major rehabilitation and large, new additions in 2002.

Of the numerous churches within the Irvington district, two are particularly worthy of mention. The Irvington Presbyterian Church and the Irvington United Methodist Church were both constructed prior to 1930. The Irvington Presbyterian Church, located at 55 South Johnson Avenue, was constructed in the late-Gothic Revival style. The church, which was officially dedicated on March 10, 1929, was designed by architect Merritt Harrison. The structure is three stories tall and is constructed of split-face Indiana limestone built on a Latin cross plan. The high-pitched gable roof is slate covered. The nave is divided by buttresses into five bays, each with a Gothic-arch window with tracery. The recessed double doors of the main facade are flanked by two copper lanterns.

The Irvington United Methodist Church, located at 30 North Audubon Road, was originally built in 1906 as the Tudor Revival-style Forrest-Howe House. In 1914, the house was purchased by Thomas Carr Howe, president of Butler University from 1908 to 1920. He sold the house to the church in 1924. That same year, architect Herbert Foltz was commissioned to design an addition to the original residence. Formal dedication of the church additions

occurred on September 12, 1926. Two later additions were made to the church, one in 1957 and the other in 1962.

When Citizen's Street Railway and the interurbans began service along East Washington Street, the old National Road became mixed in use with a strong commercial node at Ritter Avenue and Washington Street. The oldest remaining building (c.1903) at the northeast corner of Ritter and Washington originally served as Irvington's post office and as a news stand. It also housed the offices of local doctors. By 1905, the primary commercial location was moving from South Audubon Road close to the Pennsylvania Railroad Depot to Washington Street. Edward Hecker's Print Shop, located at 5237 East Washington Street, was among the first new buildings constructed on the street. Three bays wide, the painted white brick and block light-industrial structure is one story with a flat, sloping roof and parapet facade. The flat-iron shaped Irvington Masonic Temple remains as testament to the street's long-term commercial significance. Designed by architect Henry Bacon in 1921, it once housed the local post office as well as lodge spaces on the second floor. The 1913 Irving Theater is one of the oldest remaining neighborhood theaters in the city. Apartment houses on Washington Street, like Audubon Court, allowed young couples or single persons to enjoy access to Irvington and easily work downtown. The growth of Washington Street as a commercial corridor came during the Butler era. The block of buildings from 5616 to 5648 East Washington Street was built in 1927, designed by architect Art Fleck. The Tudor Revival complex contains a variety of stores housed within the brick façade, which has cross-gables with half-timbers and stucco infill.

The development of Pleasant Run Parkway in the 1920s to the design of landscape architect George Kessler, carried on the spirit of Romantic landscape design found in the original plat. Kessler also returned to the use of larger lots intended as part of the original design by Irvington platters. Thus, the architecture along the parkway, while stylistically similar to that of older parts of the district, often appears somewhat grander because of the greater spaciousness. It is, nonetheless, visually allied to the rest of the district and provides a firm contrast to the residential neighborhoods to the north and west.

Kessler was trained in landscape design at Weimar, Germany, and in civil engineering at the University of Jena. During the 1870s, he worked as a laborer on Frederick Law Olmsted's design for Central Park in New York City. As a result of this experience, Kessler's work reflects Olmsted's skill in incorporating nature into the urban setting. Kessler was hired by the City of Indianapolis in 1909, at which time a plan to link Ellenberger and Garfield Parks by a boulevard was developed. His plan for Pleasant Run Parkway preserved the creek beds as a natural element through the east side of the city and tied Pleasant Run Creek in with his other significant designs for Fall Creek.

Another building phase seen in the Irvington area was created by the construction of Pleasant Run Parkway. Houses and lots along the parkway were larger than most of the district's other homes. These larger houses represented a return to the traditional one- and two-acre lots platted originally in Irvington. Stylistically, they echo the architectural influences found in other parts of the district. 5173, 5255, and 5245 Pleasant Run Parkway South Drive are all examples of "Parkway architecture." 5173 Pleasant Pun Parkway features Neoclassical

elements as exhibited by the central Palladian-style window and Doric porch columns. The four second-story, double-hung sash windows are each flanked by shutters; the first floor windows have flat brick headers. The Neoclassical house at 5255 Pleasant Run Parkway is highlighted by a two-story, rounded portico which has a roof supported by three Ionic columns and two pilasters. Three-quarter sidelights flank the doorway. 5425 Pleasant Run Parkway exemplifies the Colonial Revival style. The gabled tile roof is accentuated by a pair of brick chimneys offset to each gable. The centrally-located door has sidelights and a transom. A wooden balustrade is located atop the portico's roof. All of the windows are double-hung sashes with limestone sills. These three houses, typical of Parkway architecture, display those qualities that differentiate these buildings from the majority of Irvington's structures. The Pleasant Run homes exhibit an increase in the setback, lot, and house size.

The combination of vernacular designs interspersed with high-style Victorian structures blend together to make Irvington an architecturally significant area. Its streetscapes and design remain important today. Although Irvington has been incorporated into Indianapolis, it has been able to keep its integrity because of its unique layout. Irvington's development as a university town is reflected in its growth patterns, architectural styles, and community planning. The architectural integrity of the area and the streetscapes remain very much intact and play an important role in the historic presence of Irvington.

The Irvington Historic District clearly represents an important phase of Indianapolis's development. As one of the three earliest planned suburbs, it represents that late-nineteenth-century interest in escaping from the increasingly industrialized urban centers to more natural settings. Irvington's plan is the direct descendant of Romantic community planning, ideas traceable back to the first half of the nineteenth century. Its cohesive architectural development reflects the district's rapid growth during the half century when Butler University was the dominant cultural influence in the community. At the same time, the homes of individuals associated with the university or with other cultural activities that thrived during the university years remain remarkably intact today as evidence of Irvington's contribution to Indianapolis's intellectual, social and cultural development.



Thorton House, located on the north circle, date unknown. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*